

Volume 10
Issue 6
June 1999



Travel Montana UPDATE

Travel Montana, Department of Commerce, Matthew T. Cohn, Travel Director
406-444-2654 ■ fax 406-444-1800 ■ internet: travelmontana.state.mt.us

A Whole New World: VISITMT.COM

There has been a total “make over” of Travel Montana’s website: VISITMT.COM. It has a fresh, new look. It’s easier to use. Some very “cool” features have been added to help the site’s visitors gather and share Montana travel information.

“We used a lot of input from users to format the website to be more fun, easier to navigate, and to get to the Montana information they were looking for,” explained Travel Montana’s Shawn Peterson, whose electronic media crew handled the “make over.”

Want to e-mail Montana information to a friend or prospective customer?



Every page on the new site has a feature to do that. Want to send an electronic postcard with a Montana photo or graphic? The site has a function for that (350 postcards were sent the first week of the site’s operation!). Want specific Montana community information? It is there along with local and regional maps, and information about opportunities within a 30-mile radius of the selected community.

Shawn says Montana’s travel information is now accessible through more site functions and it is more visually attractive. The site includes

over 5,000 photos of Montana’s tourism-related services, attractions, and communities. He encourages everyone to check their listing for accuracy. If better photos or information are available, send them in and they will be placed on the site.

This year, the site has been averaging 3,500 users daily. That means over 1 million users may visit VISITMT.COM in 1999. Be one of them and encourage others.

1999 Legislature Complete; Prepare For 2001

As mentioned last month, Montana’s tourism development and promotion program emerged from the 1999 Montana Legislative Session in just about the same form it went in. The only substantial change involved committing \$200,000 of Travel Montana’s “bed tax” funds annually to finance Montana’s Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission programs.

There were bills to drastically change the state’s tourism program, but Travel Montana Director Matthew Cohn says these proposals were debated and defeated mid-way through the session so that “bed tax” issues were not “part of the final day debates like they have been the last three sessions.”

Cohn credited early resolution of the Lewis & Clark funding question and the effective communication and strong support for the current tourism program from Montana’s businesses, communities, and individuals as the major factors influencing legislators.

There are a number of issues Montana’s tourism industry will need to consider and help address between now and the 2001 Legislative Session.

Here is Matthew’s list of challenges to prepare for:

- Local government funding continues to be an issue with debates over local option taxes and increasing the “bed tax” for new revenue being part of the mix.
- Debate continues over “bed tax” funds for infrastructure vs. marketing.
- The Montana Heritage Commission’s “bed tax” funding — \$400,000 per year — expires June 30, 2001, so future funding must be identified.
- Debates over public land access, non-resident hunting, guiding/outfitting, and other recreation issues continue.
- Term limits will create a large group of freshmen lawmakers in 2001. Consistent communication with returning lawmakers and candidates during the interim is more important than ever. Keep them in the loop.

Here’s a short list of tourism-related legislation approved in 1999. Complete text of the bills is available on the Legislature’s website: laws.leg.state.mt.us.

- HB 20 - Fort Peck Lake Fish Hatchery
- SB 89 - State VIC Signage
- SB 421 - Scenic-Heritage Byway Program
- SB 87 - Snowmobile Safety Act
- SB 352 - Korean War Veterans Memorial
- SB 439 - Guest Ranch Licensure Definition
- SB 445 - Beaverhead/Big Hole Rivers Outfitter/Guide Limits (Vetoed by Governor Racicot, Legislature’s override vote underway)

Links to Film Office Website Now Available

Montana-based crew members and production service providers can link to the Montana Film Office website: www.Montanafilm.com. There’s a \$25 fee to cover administrative costs. Contact Michelle, 444-3762 or michelle@visitmt.com, for more information.

FILM US!

Montana Film Office representatives recently attended an organizational meeting of FILM US, a new national non-profit organization promoting the United States for media projects. The FILM US mission is to increase the United States leadership role in the film industry by keeping America competitive for domestic and international film, video and new media productions. Montana Film Office reps also spoke with Congressional members regarding filming on public lands.

TV Commercials & Still Shoots

IBM filmed in Lewistown
Roger Williams Zoo filmed in Livingston
Microsoft shot in Dillon

Broadus VIC Added To State System

Montana's state-supported Visitor Information Center operations grew to eight this past May with the addition of Broadus. Last summer, the Montana Department of Transportation completed construction of a new Rest Area/Weigh Station/VIC facility on US 212, one mile southeast of the Powder River County seat. The combination of the new facility, its location on a major entryway to Montana, active

community interest in staffing and providing support services as well as a legislative request, led to the site's addition to the state system. The Powder River Chamber of Commerce is staffing the VIC. Travel Montana is providing furnishings, computer hardware and staffing funds. In addition to Broadus, the state system includes VICs in Wibaux, Culbertson, Shelby, St. Regis, Dillon, West Yellowstone and Hardin.

Overseas Marketing Program Adds Italy and Paris Offices

Montana's Overseas Marketing Contractor, RMI, is adding an office in Italy and part-time operations in Paris. The Paris office will be supervised by Barbara Jacobs, RMI's France/Benelux rep., and staffed by Mr. Herve Duxin. Dr. Olga Mazzoni will handle the Italy account. Both RMI reps will be in the region this summer and fall to familiarize themselves with the RMI states.



The Sky's Not The (Speed) Limit

Friday, May 28, Montana reinstated a numerical speed limit. Travel Montana has been working with the Governor's Office, other state agencies and

regional media to spread the word. Anything you can do to help inform our visitors would be appreciated. Here's the basics:

Interstate: 75 mph day and night
Two Lane: 70 mph day; 65 mph night;
Hwy 93: 65 mph day and night

SUPERHOST! SUPERHOST!

Montana's SUPERHOST team is covering Montana with over 40 customer service training sessions during June. This follows 30 sessions in May and dozens more provided earlier in 1999. If your community hasn't gotten on the SUPERHOST list yet, contact them by calling 756-3674 or e-mail: superhost@fvcc.cc.mt.us.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

7-8 TAC, Fairmont Hot Springs
8-13 Backroads B&B Media Tour (Russell/Yellowstone)
18 Deadline for Oct-April 2000 Calendar of Events
25-27 Show Biz Expo West, Los Angeles

July

8-13 Festive Mood in NW Montana Media Tour (Glacier)
22-27 Corps of Discovery in Yellowstone Valley Media Tour (Custer)

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.



Travel Montana
1424 Ninth Avenue
PO Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Helena, MT
Permit No. 20